

[29 November, 2001]

RAJYA SABHA

**Long Distance communication service of VSNL**

**1209. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA:** Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that VSNL is in the race for procuring licence to start long distance communication service in the country;

(b) If so, the progress made in this regard;

(c) whether it is also a fact that VSNL is among the 13 PSUs slated for disinvestment in the current fiscal year; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) VSNL has filed an application with Department of Telecommunications for grant of Licence for National Long Distance (NLD) Service on 2nd November, 2001.

(c) and (d) 25% Disinvestment of VSNL to a strategic partner is currently in process and likely to be completed by January, 2002.

**Vacant post of Telephone Mechanics**

**1210. SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:**

**SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:**

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to refer to the answer to Starred Question 546 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 24th April 2001, and state:

(a) whether the BSNL has filled up all 6873 vacant posts of telephone mechanics that existed on 31st March, 2001;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when, the balance trained personnel would be accommodated in the post of telephone mechanics?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) all the 6873 vacant posts of Telephone Mechanics (redesignated as Telecom Mechanic) have not yet been filled up. However, the process of filling up the vacancies in the cadre of Telecom Mechanic is under progress.

(c) the balance trained personnel will be considered for promotion as Telecom Mechanic after working out the additional justification as per norms against increase in assets on yearly basis.

**Application for Telephone Connections**

†1211. CHAUDHARY HARMOHAN SINGH YADAV: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications for telephone connections received by Ranikhet Exchange from Bhandar Khola, Tarai, Dungari, Bamora and Maidari villages of Almora District;

(b) by when, Government propose to provide the residents of the said villages with telephone connections; and

(c) the steps Government propose to take for extending/developing telephone network in Talla Salt Patti of Almora District?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) Only one application for telephone connection has been received by Ranikhet exchange from Tarari village alone. It is proposed to provide telephone connection to the applicant by March, 2002. However, Village Public Telephones (VPTs) are proposed to be provided in these villages by March, 2002 by underground cable/overhead lines.

(c) It is planned to open new telephone exchanges at Machhod and Harada during 2001-2002 for extending/developing telephone services in Talla Salt Patti of Almora District. Simultaneously, it is also being planned to install Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) system at Shasikhal Telephone Exchange during 2002-2003. However, the places which are not likely to be covered by WLL system are proposed to be covered by Statellite Terminals.

**ISD calls on cheaper rate**

†1212. DR. A.K. PATEL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases of making ISD calls on cheaper rates which have been brought to Governments' notice during the last three years, State-wise;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.